



Global Governance Research Group

Building Alternative Coalitions for Global Governance

Call for papers for an online conference, Wednesday 17 June 2026 (9 am to 6 pm CET)
in view of an eBook publication with [Global Policy](#)

The global community has been deeply fractured since 2020. Far from bringing humanity closer together to face a common challenge, Covid-19 saw cleavages emerge as nations competed for vaccines and medical supplies, as East and West rivalled each other in vaccine diplomacy, and as the “West” did relatively little to help the “Global South” with a worldwide vaccination campaign. Worse followed, as Russia launched Europe’s first major land war since 1945 with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and Israel began a ruthless military campaign in Gaza following the brutal Hamas attack on 7 October 2023. For many countries outside the “West”, marked by their own histories of colonisation, the present tragedies in Gaza and the West Bank are viewed as another imperial conquest.

The return to the White House of Donald Trump in January 2025 has led to a broader dismantling of the Liberal International Order (LIO) and further war. The new Trump administration’s tariff policies have undermined the rules and principles of the World Trade Organisation. With its attacks on small boats in the Caribbean, the kidnapping of Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro in January 2026, expansionist threats against Greenland, and the military action against Iran in June 2025 and February 2026, the second Trump administration has repeatedly violated both international and domestic laws. In the case of the new war against Iran by Israel and the United States, launched on 28 February 2026, the Middle East has plunged into a wider conflict, with global ramifications.

Global governance is in turmoil and the United Nations (UN) does not seem able to fulfil its functions adequately, especially in the field of peace and security. New dynamics have also unfolded, from China’s Belt and Road Initiative and its creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), to the BRICS+ and the BRICS Development Bank, President Trump’s creation of a “Board of Peace”, and a number of coalitions of the willing in fields as diverse as the fight against climate change and the war in Ukraine.

This conference seeks to make an academic contribution to building alternative coalitions for global governance. It aims to build on, *and open up* previous work by the [Global Governance Research Group](#) (GGRG) on *Our Common Agenda [by the UN] and its Implementation* (2021), *The European Union and the Pursuit of Global Governance in a Multi-Polar, Fractured World* (2023), and *The European Union in an Illiberal World* (2025). In particular, the GGRG, which brings together members of the [UNA Europa](#) university alliance, is looking to promote dialogue with colleagues beyond Europe. We thus welcome contributions from all countries relating to:

1. Tackling Climate Change

As intergovernmental coordination on environmental and climate policy becomes increasingly politicised and contested, a governance vacuum is emerging that requires objective-oriented

leadership. Thus, in the context of fragmentation of the LIO, how can effective multi-level climate coalitions be sustained? We therefore invite papers addressing: the role of cities and regions in implementing the Paris Agreement amid declining multilateral coordination; civic organisations and civil society in global climate governance; climate “coalitions of the willing” and transnational networks; innovative climate finance mechanisms; or the potential of BRICS and other alternative forums to shape climate change coordination policies.

2. Reduction of Poverty

According to the 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index published by UNDP, approximately 1.1 billion people live in multidimensional poverty, defined as simultaneous deprivation in health, education, and living standards. Over half of them are children. The growing interconnection between climate risks and poverty is likely to exacerbate this situation, increasing competition over scarce resources. This thematic area seeks to address the following question: what conditions are necessary to retain institutional capacity and political legitimacy to coordinate global poverty reduction effectively in an era of geopolitical fragmentation, increasingly frequent militarised conflicts, and rapidly shrinking development budgets? Relevant sub-themes include: the performance of the UN and its agencies in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); regional dynamics and other “localisation” efforts to leverage regional cooperation (e.g. through the African Union, ASEAN and the EU); institutional specialisation, and local government action to better tailor, fund, and implement the SDGs, as well as tackle the impact of contemporary conflicts on food security and development trajectories; and the role of international and regional financial institutions in poverty reduction.

3. The Arctic and Outer Space as New Domains of Global Security and Cooperation under Geopolitical Tensions

The Arctic and outer space represent strategic domains in which environmental vulnerability, technological innovation, and security competition intersect. Historically, these domains were framed as areas of functional cooperation, through institutions such as the Arctic Council and treaty-based regimes including the Outer Space Treaty. Today, however, they are increasingly exposed to pressures arising from great-power competition, commercial expansion, and technological rivalry. We invite papers on the future of the Arctic Council; the militarisation of the Arctic Region; access to natural resources and the role of the UN; the involvement of non-Arctic actors (e.g. China, the European Union (EU)) in Arctic governance; and the adequacy of existing space regulations in the context of the “New Space” industry and strategic rivalry among great powers.

4. South–South Cooperation

South–South cooperation has become an increasingly institutionalised field of economic, political, and environmental initiatives, coordinated in part by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. Initiatives such as BRICS, the AIIB, and large-scale infrastructure programmes such as the Belt and Road Initiative raise the question of whether South–South cooperation constitutes a genuine alternative model of global governance. We welcome papers on the institutionalisation of South–South cooperation; the normative and strategic roles of China, Brazil, India, and other emerging powers; and the financing models and instruments of South–South cooperation.

5. Creating a Coalition of the Willing in Trade

In the context of renewed protectionism and potential large-scale tariff increases associated with the second Trump administration, persistent uncertainty and mounting concern surround the erosion of the rules-based trading system centred on the World Trade Organization. Following the ruling of the

US Supreme Court that the broad tariffs imposed by President Trump under emergency powers were unlawful, the administration invoked an alternative legal basis. It subsequently introduced a temporary global tariff of 10 per cent, to apply for 150 days beginning on 25 February 2026. These changes have further intensified uncertainty about the future direction of US tariff policy. Against this backdrop, this thematic area seeks contributions the emergence of a possible “coalition of the willing” of countries committed to predictable trade rules and capable of coordinating responses to unilateral tariff measures. Particular themes linked to this include whether such a coalition would stabilise multilateralism or accelerate bloc formation; could it remain open and inclusive rather than exclusive; what role could the EU play as a regulatory power; and how would other significant global trading partners react?

Papers will be initially presented at the online conference on 17 June 2026, and authors will need to send the first versions of their text to the scientific committee by 1 June 2026. They will receive feedback on their work from the conference and from the scientific committee by the end of June 2026. This will allow authors to prepare a final version of their texts during the summer of 2026, to be returned to the scientific committee by 1 September 2026. Accepted final papers will be published first as opinion blogs on the website of [Global Policy](#) and then, once all papers are ready, they will be published collectively as an eBook (with an ISBN) in early 2027: see the [blogs here](#) for our last conference, and view the final [eBook here](#). These are all on open access.

Final papers should not be longer than 4,000 words, including all references. They may either be in the form of “policy insights” arguing a particular point, or (original) research presentations. Authors should be able to provide their final versions in *good English* (using AI tools appropriately), although we will be able to give some editorial support with proofreading papers at the final stages of publication.

Proposals should be sent to [Nicholas Sowels \(nicholas.sowels@univ-paris1.fr\)](mailto:nicholas.sowels@univ-paris1.fr) by 20 March 2026. Authors will be informed of their acceptance in early April, to give them time to prepare their preliminary texts for 1 June 2026. The conference will be held as a Zoom meeting (i.e. it will be a closed event, limited to speakers and organisers).

Proposals should be 300-400 words long in Word .docx format, followed by a short biography of authors (with exact titles and present positions indicated).

Scientific Committee: Michał Dulak (Associate Professor, Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of Jagiellonian University), Maria C. Latorre (Full Professor, Universidad Complutense), Nicholas Sowels (Associate Professor, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), and Jan Wouters (Full Professor, Director, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven).